

Deep Fire

Monday, April 27, 2009 8:00 pm

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Cypress National Preserve
33100 Tamiami Trail East
Ocohopee, FL 34141



Weather today allowed fire crews to conduct burnout operations, as they continue to suppress the Deep Fire. The burnout put up a considerable amount of smoke, but was a very successful suppression tactic as crews work to prevent additional spread to the east. The Deep Fire has burned approximately 24,000 acres since April 22nd and is 30% contained. The Southern Area Incident Management Blue Team assumed management of this fire on April 26, 2009.

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Tomorrow

Fire Size: 24,000
Containment: 30%

Weather forecast calls for continued east-southeast winds with predicted high temperature around 90 degrees. Crews will work Tuesday to secure all fire lines and mop up the interior. The fire management team is working in concert with Florida Highway Patrol and Department of Transportation to reopen the I-75 corridor as soon as it is safe to do so. On Tuesday, I-75 will open once visibility improves. Fire objectives are to provide for public and firefighter safety, as well as the protection of park resources and private property within the fire area.

The Role of Fire & Management



Fire is a natural and necessary component of the habitats of the Big Cypress region. Pinelands and freshwater prairies require periodic fires to control the spread of shrubs and trees. Occasional burns help provide open habitat for the proliferation of herbaceous plants and the wildlife that depend on them. Big Cypress National Preserve serves as important habitat for a variety of wildlife. These floral and faunal species have evolved in coexistence with wildlife in the ecosystem.

The fire management team of Big Cypress National Preserve actively utilizes fire to maintain the integrity of several local ecosystems, reduce fuel loads in susceptible areas, and create buffers to hamper wildfires.

Area and Road Closures

In the interest of safety, Big Cypress National Preserve has enacted some recreational access closures. These are necessary to ensure the safety of visitors and fire personnel. All areas in the Bear Island Unit, and all areas north of Fire Prairie Trail, including the trail itself, in the Deep Lake Unit are closed. State Road 29, along the western border of the preserve, remains closed. Florida Highway Patrol anticipates opening I-75 mid-morning—subject to change based upon fire activity and smoke.